



With sustainable forest management, Lao wood processing industry will have adequate timber supply to produce high quality timber products for export to countries seeking only legal timber

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Laos Prepares Timber Legality Definition for First FLEGT VPA Negotiation with EU

In a workshop on 26 and 27 April the Technical Working Group of the Lao FLEGT process has elaborated a first draft Timber Legality Definition, in preparation for the first face to face FLEGT/VPA negotiations between Lao PDR and the European Union (EU), scheduled for the last quarter of 2016.

“Having a concrete definition on what is legal timber is crucial for Laos as it acts as an 'entry ticket' to generate new export opportunities in the ASEAN Economic Community and other export markets, such as Europe, the U.S., China, ASEAN, Australia, Japan and South Korea, requesting legally verified timber”, said Mr. Manohack Rasachack, Director General of Department of Industry and Handicraft, Ministry of Industry and Commerce. “Once legal timber is defined, the next milestone is to enhance the competitiveness of the Lao timber industry through the improvement of the supply of raw materials, qualification of staff and workers in the wood processing industry, sector associations, and access to market and product information for each individual company”, he added.

During the two-day meeting, participants also had a chance to discuss the scope of the FLEGT/VPA negotiation regarding product, market destination and timber sources, with the study results of the supply chain control and verification procedures in natural production forest presented.

Chief Negotiators of Lao PDR and EU Discuss Lao EU-FLEGT Process

Dr. Phouangparisak Pravongviengkham, Vice-Minister of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) and Chief Negotiator of Lao PDR for the FLEGT VPA negotiations with the EU and Ms. Emmanuelle Maire, EU Chief Negotiator, met on 8 April 2016 to discuss the next steps towards the first negotiation on the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) on Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT).

“Lao PDR is ready to enter the negotiations with the EU. Negotiating this trade agreement needs to go hand-in-hand with strengthening value-adding wood processing in Laos based on legal timber from sustainable forest resources. This will increase State revenues, create new jobs and will allow Laos to access new export markets”, said Dr. Phouangparisak. “At the same time law enforcement has to be stepped up”.

FSC Forest Certification Pays Off in Vietnam

The benefits of forest management certification in Vietnam according to the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) are two-fold. Firstly, only those forest enterprises that hold a FSC certificate are allowed to harvest and sell timber from natural forests. Secondly, the FSC certification facilitates the access to new markets, in particular for lesser known timber species.

This was the outcome of a visit from 21 to 25 March by a Lao delegation, led by Mr. Sousath SAYAKHOUMMAN, Director General of Department of Forestry, to the state forest enterprise of Dak To in Kontum province in Vietnam. Representatives from Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (Department of Forestry, Department of Forest Inspection), Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Ministry of Finance and the respective line agencies on provincial level from Sayaboury, Khammouane and Attapeu, as well as staff of GIZ ProFLEGT and WWF were participating in the visit.

The forest management operations of this state forest enterprise are FSC certified since 2011. The study tour provided valuable lessons learnt for the management of FSC certified forest areas in Laos. In particular, the participants from Laos could see the practical implication of the chain of custody of timber, a different system of forest inventory, timber harvesting planning and log marking, as well as learn about the system of results of timber auction conducted by Dak To company. Furthermore, the team could learn about benefit sharing system between forest company and the local people regarding the protection and use of forest.

The visit was also an opportunity to enhance the cooperation between the two neighbouring provinces Attapeu in Laos and Kontum in Vietnam, in particular to learn about the tasks and work of FPD, and in respect to data exchange concerning the timber flow from Laos to Vietnam. This study group was able to visit a conservation forest areas where the particular focus is on the protection of Siamese Rosewood (Maikhayung), which is an endangered, CITES-listed timber tree species, not only in Vietnam but also in Laos, Thailand and Cambodia. This data exchange is pivotal for harmonising the Timber Legality Assurance Systems (TLAS) which are developed by both countries as part of their negotiations on FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreements with the EU.



Mr. Sousath SAYAKHOUMMAN, Director General of Department of Forestry, is being informed about log marking practices in Vietnam

EU and Indonesia to Start First-Ever Licensing Scheme for Legal Timber Exports

The EU and Indonesia are ready to move towards the start of the first ever Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) licensing scheme on legally produced tropical timber, as announced by the Indonesian President Joko Widodo, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, and European Council President Donald Tusk, with the aim to reduce illegal logging and promote trade in legally produced timber between the EU and Indonesia.

The announcement is based on the joint assessment that Indonesia is fully ready to implement the Indonesia-EU Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA), based on the inclusion of all relevant product groups in the scope of the Agreement. With this breakthrough the two Parties are now in a position to move swiftly towards a fully operational licencing system making Indonesia the first country to pass this final hurdle.

Source: Press release by European Commission, 21st April 2016.

Lao Stakeholders Review FLEGT Progress

On 5 and 6 April 2016, key stakeholders from the FLEGT Technical Working Group gathered to conduct M&E for the 1st quarter in 2016 of the work done on Lao EU-FLEGT process. The M&E report has been approved by the National Support and Development Committee on 22 April 2016, and is available on:

<http://flegtlaos.com/resources/workshop-documentation/>

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